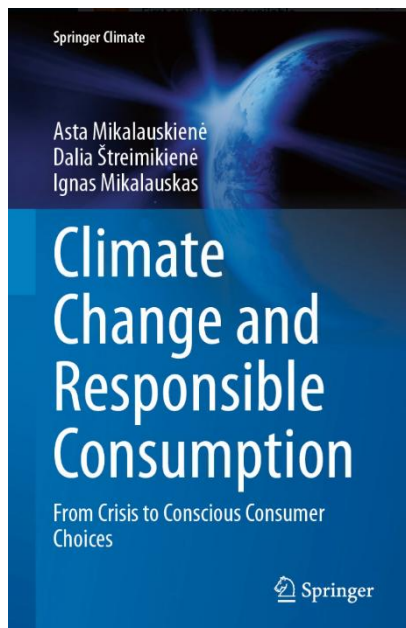


Book Review

**Reviewed book:** Asta MIKALAUŠKIENĖ, Dalia STREIMIKIENĖ, Ignas MIKALAUŠKAS (2026), *Climate Change and Responsible Consumption: From Crisis to Conscious Consumer Choices*, Springer Cham, 252 p.

**Reviewer:** Dr. Indre Siksnylyte-Butkiene, Associate Professor at Kaunas University of Applied Sciences

**JEL classification:** Q01, Q56, Q58



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**Title:** **CLIMATE CHANGE AND RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION: FROM CRISIS TO CONSCIOUS CONSUMER CHOICES**

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*Climate Change and Responsible Consumption: From Crisis to Conscious Consumer Choices* is a timely contribution to current debates on sustainability, climate change, and consumer behaviour. Rather than treating responsible consumption as a matter of individual preference alone, the book places it within a broader framework shaped by institutions, information, crisis experience, and the material conditions of everyday life. This is one of the book's immediate strengths. Rather than reducing responsibility to individual consumer preference, the authors treat consumption as something shaped by institutions, information, crisis experience, and the material conditions in which people live and make choices.

The book is organized into four chapters in a logical sequence. The first chapter provides the scientific and policy background by discussing the causes and consequences of climate change, the main indicators used to track it, and the development of European Union mitigation and adaptation policy. The second chapter turns to sustainable development and responsible consumption in a broader conceptual sense, including discussion of the Sustainable Development Goals, sustainable production, and the circular

economy. The third chapter addresses responsible consumption more directly, focusing on its meaning, its relationship with climate change, the role of education and information, the implications of online shopping, and policy measures designed to promote more sustainable patterns of behaviour. The fourth chapter then shifts the discussion into a historical and crisis-oriented perspective by examining how the 1973 oil crisis, the 2008 global financial crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the Russian-Ukrainian war influenced consumer behaviour and public understandings of responsibility. This structure gives the book a coherent progression. It moves gradually from diagnosis to concept, and from concept to social and historical application.

The book's notable strength is that it examines consumption in relation to the institutional, policy, and socio-economic contexts that shape it. The preface of the book already makes clear that climate change is not treated here simply as an environmental problem in the narrow sense, but as a wider societal transformation that requires attention to values, patterns of demand, and collective choices. That broader framing is important because it prevents the discussion from narrowing to individual consumer duty alone. The argument that emerges is not that individual consumers alone carry responsibility for transition, but that consumption becomes meaningful only when considered together with production, policy, infrastructure, and social norms. As a result, the book moves beyond accounts that treat sustainable consumption mainly as a matter of personal ethics.

The first chapter plays an important supporting role in this regard. It offers a wide-ranging overview of climate change drivers and indicators, including greenhouse gas emissions, changes in temperature, sea-level rise, sea ice, land cover, climate-related disasters, ocean warming, and acidification. It then links these environmental pressures to the policy responses of the European Union, including climate mitigation targets, the European Green Deal, and wider decarbonisation measures. The opening chapter is more contextual than analytical, but that choice is justified by the book's wider aims. It grounds the later discussion of responsible consumption in a concrete environmental and institutional setting. As a result, the book's central theme does not appear as a detached moral appeal, but as a response to measurable and escalating ecological change.

The second chapter usefully situates responsible consumption within the history of sustainable development. By moving through the emergence of environmental awareness, the Brundtland Report, and the Sustainable Development Goals, the authors show that debates about responsible consumption did not emerge in isolation. They are part of a longer effort to reconcile environmental protection, social well-being, and economic development. This context is useful and appropriately placed. It helps the reader see responsible consumption not as a fashionable addition to sustainability discourse, but as one of its practical and normative expressions. The discussion of circular economy principles is also valuable in this part of the book. Circularity is presented not merely as a technical or industrial issue, but as something closely related to consumption practices and to broader shifts in how value is understood. Resource efficiency, longer product life, repair, reuse, and waste prevention are all treated as part of a more responsible relationship between households, goods, and environmental limits. This also makes the book more useful from a policy perspective. Its argument is not limited to changing individual behaviour; it also emphasizes the need for wider institutional and market conditions that support and normalize more sustainable choices.

The third chapter is especially important because it refuses an overly simplified view of consumer responsibility. The discussion does not remain at the level of awareness or individual goodwill. Instead, it emphasizes the role of education, access to reliable information, communication, digital technologies, and institutional support. The authors repeatedly suggest that it is not enough to ask consumers to behave

differently if supportive conditions are missing. Responsible consumption, in this account, depends on whether sustainable options are understandable, available, and socially reinforced. This is one of the more persuasive arguments in the book. It reflects the practical reality that behavioural change tends to remain uneven when markets, infrastructures, and policy environments continue to favour convenience, excess, or short-term affordability over sustainability.

The chapter on global crises is arguably the book's most distinctive contribution. The authors make the convincing point that responsible consumption often becomes most visible not in periods of comfort, but in periods of disruption. Crises expose dependencies that usually remain hidden. They also reshape the boundary between necessity and excess. The treatment of the 1973 oil crisis is particularly effective in showing how energy scarcity helped generate forms of energy-conscious behaviour long before current transition debates took shape. The discussion of the Russian-Ukrainian war is equally timely, since it brings the question of energy dependence, affordability, and ethical choice into the present European context. The chapter's wider contribution lies in showing that crises do not simply interrupt consumption patterns; they can also reframe them morally, politically, and socially.

The historical perspective gives the book added depth. It suggests that responsible consumption is not a fixed doctrine, but an evolving social practice that takes shape under changing conditions. The financial crisis, the pandemic, and the energy shock associated with war are not treated as identical events, and the authors do not force them into a single explanatory template. Instead, they use them to show how different crises encourage reflection on different aspects of consumption: restraint, resilience, fairness, locality, solidarity, or sufficiency. That is one of the more thoughtful features of the book.

Another strength of the book is its accessibility to a wider audience. It is clearly designed to be useful not only to specialists, but also to students and interdisciplinary readers. Its organization is straightforward, and the discussion is supported by figures, policy examples, and a clear progression of themes. As a result, the book is particularly well suited for teaching and for readers seeking an accessible overview of the relationship between climate change and consumption without losing sight of the institutional and ethical dimensions of the issue.

Overall, *Climate Change and Responsible Consumption: From Crisis to Conscious Consumer Choices* is a timely, well-conceived, and relevant contribution to contemporary sustainability scholarship. It makes a convincing case that responsible consumption should not be viewed as a purely individual moral obligation, but as a socially embedded and historically shaped practice influenced by institutions, infrastructures, crises, and public values. One of the book's main strengths is its argument that global disruptions can reshape how consumption is understood and practiced. The book will be of interest to readers working on climate change, sustainable development, energy transition, consumer behaviour, and the wider social dimensions of environmental change.

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## SANTRAUKA

Monografijoje „Klimato kaita ir atsakingas vartojimas: nuo krizės prie sąmoningų vartotojų pasirinkimų“ nagrinėjamas vienas svarbiausių tvarumo diskusijų klausimų – kaip atsakingas vartojimas turėtų būti suprantamas klimato kaitos, išteklių ribotumo ir pasikartojančių pasaulinių krizių sąlygomis. Viena svarbiausių knygos stiprybių yra tai, kad atsakingas vartojimas joje nėra traktuojamas vien kaip individualių pasirinkimų ar asmeninės moralės klausimas. Priešingai, jis analizuojamas kaip reiškinys, kurį formuoja platesnės institucinės, politinės, ekonominės ir socialinės aplinkybės. Tokia perspektyva leidžia atsakingą vartojimą suvokti kaip socialiai ir struktūriškai sąlygotą praktiką.

Knyga sudaryta iš keturių nuosekliai susietų skyrių. Pirmojoje dalyje aptariamos klimato kaitos priežastys ir pasekmės, pagrindiniai jos rodikliai bei Europos Sąjungos klimato kaitos švelninimo ir prisitaikymo politikos raida. Ši dalis sukuria tvirtą mokslinį ir politinį pagrindą vėlesnei diskusijai, todėl atsakingo vartojimo tema pateikiama ne kaip abstraktus etinis raginimas, bet kaip atsakas į konkrečius ir išmatuojamus aplinkos pokyčius. Klimato kaitos procesai siejami su realiais ekologiniais, ekonominiais ir socialiniais padariniais, o tai sustiprina bendrą knygos argumentacijos pagrįstumą.

Antrojoje dalyje atsakingas vartojimas siejamas su platesne darnaus vystymosi idėjų raida. Aptariamas aplinkosauginio sąmoningumo formavimasis, Brundtland ataskaitos reikšmė, Darnaus vystymosi tikslai, tvari gamyba ir žiedinės ekonomikos principai. Tokia prieiga leidžia parodyti, kad atsakingas vartojimas nėra atsitiktinis ar laikinas tvarumo diskurso elementas, bet viena iš jo praktinių ir normatyvinių išraiškų. Žiedinė ekonomika knygoje taip pat nagrinėjama ne vien kaip techninis sprendinys, bet kaip požiūris, glaudžiai susijęs su vartojimo praktikomis, išteklių naudojimu, ilgesniu produktų gyvavimo ciklu, taisymu, pakartotiniu naudojimu ir atliekų prevencija.

Trečiojoje dalyje atsakingas vartojimas aptariamas dar konkrečiau. Čia pabrėžiama, kad nepakanka vien raginti vartotojus elgtis sąmoningiau. Lygiai taip pat svarbu, ar tvaresni pasirinkimai yra aiškūs, prieinami, suprantami ir palaikomi platesnės socialinės bei institucinės aplinkos. Dėl to reikšmingu veiksniu laikomas švietimas, patikima informacija, komunikacija, skaitmeninės technologijos ir institucinis palaikymas. Tokia pozicija suteikia knygai daugiau praktinio pagrįstumo ir leidžia išvengti siauro moralizuojančio požiūrio į vartotojų elgseną.

Išskirtinę vietą knygoje užima pasaulinių krizių poveikio vartojimui analizė. 1973 m. naftos krizė, 2008 m. pasaulinė finansų krizė, COVID-19 pandemija ir Rusijos karas prieš Ukrainą nagrinėjami kaip laikotarpiai, kurie ne tik sutrikdė įprastas vartojimo praktikas, bet ir pakeitė jų trajektorijas. Krizės atskleidžia priklausomybes, iš naujo apibrėžia būtinybės ir pertekliaus ribas bei suteikia vartojimui naujų moralinių, socialinių ir politinių reikšmių. Ši perspektyva leidžia atsakingą vartojimą suvokti kaip kintančią socialinę praktiką, kurios turinys ir reikšmė formuojasi priklausomai nuo istorinių, ekonominių ir geopolitinių aplinkybių.

Ši knyga vertintina kaip savalaikis indėlis į tvarumo, klimato kaitos ir vartojimo studijų lauką, rodantis, kad atsakingas vartojimas turėtų būti suprantamas ne kaip individuali moralinė pareiga, o kaip socialiai, instituciškai ir istoriškai formuojama praktika. Knyga aktuali tiems, kurie domisi klimato kaita, darniu vystymusi, energetikos transformacija, vartotojų elgsena ir platesniais socialiniais aplinkos pokyčių aspektais.

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Kauno kolegija*